

**Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of)	
)	
Amendment of Part 97 of the Commission's)	
Amateur Radio Service Rules to Eliminate)	RM - 10786
Morse Code Proficiency Testing Requirements)	
For All Classes of Amateur Licenses)	
)	
To: The Commission)	

Comments Of Steven P. Sande, KCØEZH

I wholeheartedly support the proposed amendment of Part 97 of the Commission's Amateur Radio Service Rules to eliminate Morse Code proficiency testing requirements for all classes of amateur licenses. At this time almost no commercial or government radio services use Morse telegraphy, making the need for a pool of Morse trained radio operators obsolete. With new digital modes available, skill in Morse Code is no longer a requirement for effective emergency communications by amateurs.

As the Commission is well aware, the IARU recognizes that continuing Morse proficiency requirements is not in the best interest of the future of amateur radio. In WT Docket No. 98-143, the Commission concluded that the public interest is best served by reducing the Morse telegraphy examination requirement to the minimum level that meets the ITU Radio Regulations. Those regulations now state that the "minimum requirement" for any class of amateur license is no Morse test at all. Many other countries, including Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Germany, The Netherlands and Norway have already eliminated their Morse test requirements.

The Morse proficiency test is unnecessary and undesirable. In my personal case, it has been a barrier to advancement from a Technician class (no code) license to an Advanced or Extra class license as I have been able to pass the written examinations and prove my technical proficiency, but have not been able to pass the 5 wpm code examination. The Morse proficiency test doesn't prove my ability to contribute to the advancement

of the radio art, nor does it provide any indication of my character or intelligence. What it has done is frustrate a licensed Professional Engineer from becoming more active in the Amateur Radio Service.

When the Commission relaxed the rules regarding Morse proficiency within the last decade, the immediate result was a flood of new entrants into the Amateur Radio Service as these people no longer had to take the Morse test to obtain the Technician level license. Since then, the Service has stagnated as these new amateurs are confronted with a barrier (the Morse test) that seems to be nothing more than a way for a few companies to profit from the sale of Morse training materials.

From my understanding of the Commission's authority, you can amend the Part 97 rules to eliminate Morse proficiency requirements by expedited order without formal notice and public input. By granting this petition to the Commission, a burden on applicants for amateur radio licenses would be removed, no additional requirement would be imposed, and no party or other person would be prejudiced by the Commission action. This would be a smart decision on the part of the Commission as it is within the Commission's authority, it would conserve the Commission's limited and valuable resources in dealing with a matter that has already been considered extensively, and it would remove a restrictive burden that the Commission has already determined does not serve any regulatory purpose.

I certainly hope that this request for the prompt elimination of Morse test requirements from the rules does not get combined with unrelated issues such as band segmentation, changes in the number of license classes, changes in operator privileges by license class, etc..., as that would result in a long delay in resolving this important issue.

In conclusion, I would personally like to see the Commission enact the following changes to its rules as quickly as possible:

- Eliminate the "Element 1" Morse test totally from the Commission's rules for all license classes.
- Since the only testing distinction between the Technician class and the (grandfathered) Technician Plus class is the "Element 1" Morse Test, modify, as a consequential and logical change, the privileges afforded to Technician class licensees to be equivalent to those currently afforded to Technician Plus licensees and "Technician with Morse credit" licensees.

Respectfully submitted,

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